

Policy: **Program Deactivation, Reactivation, and Discontinuation**

Responsible for policy: Academic & Student Affairs

Policy number: **A-25**

Most recent approval date: February 2016

### **Policy Statement**

The final authority to deactivate and/or discontinue academic programs rests with the College Board of Trustees. Before a final decision is made concerning the deactivation or discontinuance of programs, the President and the Provost are obligated to consult with administrators, faculty, and professional staff in a meaningful way, consistent with the SUNY “Program Deactivation and Discontinuance Policy”.

### **Reason for Policy**

The deactivation or discontinuance of an academic program may have significant consequences for the entire college community, including faculty and staff as well as current and prospective students. Recommendations for all Program Deactivations, Reactivations, and Discontinuances are considered to be curricular in nature; as the curriculum exists within the purview of the faculty, all proposals to deactivate, reactivate, or discontinue a program will be reviewed by Academic Senate. All proposals for a deactivation, reactivation, or discontinuance originating from the Provost must provide evidence that the program in question has been reviewed in the most recent Program Mix Committee report.

### **Applicability of the Policy**

All faculty, staff, prospective and accepted students should be familiar with this policy.

### **Definitions**

Deactivation: Suspends the program but the program remains formally registered with NYSED. Following the deactivation date no new students will be admitted to the program. Deactivation is a formal process that is used to allow a campus to determine the feasibility of continuing the program.

Discontinuation: Program is eliminated and request for deregistration is made to the SUNY Board of Trustees. The discontinuance date is set as the date that the last student in the program graduates. Deactivation does not need to precede Discontinuation.

Program: NYSED defines a program as “formal education requirements necessary to qualify for certificates or degrees”.

Reactivation: During the deactivation period and prior to discontinuation, a program could be reactivated if evidence is provided, reviewed, and accepted, following the same process as deactivation.

Consult: To confer with various constituents prior to committing a course of action and consider recommendations in a meaningful way.

Meaningful Way: A vote of members is taken and recorded.

### **Related Documents**

- SUNY Program Deactivation and Discontinuance Policy

### **Review dates/action taken (requires Board of Trustees approval):**

- February 2016: Board of Trustee approval

Procedure: **Program Deactivation, Reactivation, and Discontinuation**

Procedure number: **A-25**

Responsible for procedure: Academic & Student Affairs

Most recent effective date: February 2016

### **Procedure for Academic Program Deactivation or Discontinuance**

All State University of New York institutions are required to have procedures in place to deactivate or discontinue any academic program when appropriate and deemed necessary.

The reasons or conditions under which an academic program may be deactivated or discontinued include but are not limited to:

- An academic program no longer being considered a viable offering or in accord with the mission of the college
- Integration of one program into another
- Insufficient enrollment or retention of students in a program
- Budgetary necessity requiring elimination or reduction of academic programs

The deactivation or discontinuance of an academic program may have significant consequences for the entire college community, including faculty and staff as well as current or prospective students. Therefore, administration, faculty, staff and student interests and perspectives must be represented in discussions and documents of a defined process that may lead to the deactivation or discontinuance of any academic program.

The deactivation or discontinuance of an academic program must be decided and implemented in a way that is consistent with contractual obligations.

In the case of deactivation or discontinuance, the College must provide an orderly and phased transition for currently enrolled students.

The College must carefully consider proposals to deactivate or discontinue a program at the College.

The final decision-making authority to deactivate or discontinue an academic program rests with the Finger Lakes Community College Board of Trustees.

#### The Role of the Faculty and the Curriculum Committee

#### DEFINITIONS (RE: SUNY Request to Deactivate and/or Discontinue a Program Form – 01/06/12)

Deactivation: A campus does not admit any more students to a program, but wishes to maintain the program's registration. This may be done to reassess the need for the program or restructure a program. This action is internal to SUNY and limited in duration to no more than three years.

The Deactivation Effective Date is the first regular admission date for which new students will no longer be permitted to enroll in the program.

Deactivation of a program must be approved by the SUNY Provost.

Discontinuance: A campus no longer offers the program nor awards a credential for completion of the program. The program is removed from the State Education Department's Inventory of Registered Programs. SUNY review/approval must precede SED review.

The College can stop offering a degree, but it can maintain and offer some of the courses that were integral to that degree in service of other degree programs.

The Discontinuance Effective Date is the last graduation date for which a credential for completion of the program is awarded.

Discontinuance of a program must be approved by the SUNY Provost.

*NOTE:* If a proposed discontinued program is the sole program in a HEGIS category at a campus, discontinuance requires approval of the SUNY Board of Trustees. The campus retains the master plan authority in that discipline, and the re-introduction of programs in that HEGIS category would not require a master plan amendment.

### Review Process

The Curriculum Committee will initially evaluate the need for deactivation or discontinuance of a program under the following circumstances:

1. The Provost, an AVP, a Department Chair, or faculty member provides the Curriculum Committee with documented information demonstrating why the program is being considered for deactivation or discontinuance. To be considered, any request must be accompanied by compelling written data and/or a written statement. Justifiable reasons may include, but are not limited to:
  - Program no longer meets student needs and does not merit updating.
  - Significant decrease in enrollment not parallel to college-wide trends.
  - Insufficient enrollment to maintain full-time faculty loads.
  - Significant decrease in students graduating.
  - Negation of articulation agreements by external institutions.
  - Significant problems with students' ability to transfer.
  - Poor review by an external accreditation or licensing body.
  - Problems with maintaining or updating facilities.
  - Significant changes in actual or projected employment opportunities in the field.
  - Serious concerns about adherence to academic standards.
  - Program costs appear to exceed the College's ability to support the program.
  - Significant changes in governmental regulations/procedures which adversely impact the program.

*None of these, in themselves, will automatically trigger a review for deactivation or discontinuance.*

2. At this point, based on the evidence presented, the Curriculum Committee will vote to either recommend discontinuing or deactivating the program upon at least a 2/3 favorable vote of all members present or recommend the program continues upon at least a 2/3 favorable vote of all members present. If at least a 2/3 favorable vote is not reached in either case, the Curriculum Committee will convene a review panel to determine the appropriate action for the program
3. The Review Panel will consist of twelve members including:
  - the Curriculum Committee Chair who will act as chair of the review panel. If the Curriculum Committee Chair is from the program under review, a designee selected by the Curriculum Committee will be appointed and will act as Chair of the review panel.
  - a faculty member/or coordinator from the program under review (take recommendations for membership from the department under review)
  - a tenured faculty member from a related discipline (take recommendations for membership from the department under review)
  - a tenured faculty member from a discipline not related to the program (take recommendations for membership from the department under review)
  - the Department Chair of the program under review
  - a Department Chair from a related discipline (take recommendations for membership from the department under review)
  - the AVP of Instruction
  - a student representative or alumnus (recommended by the program coordinator, if available otherwise the department chair)

- a member of the program advisory board (recommended by the program coordinator, if available, otherwise the department chair)
  - a representative selected by the VP of Finance
  - the Director of Institutional Effectiveness
  - an officer of the Faculty Union
4. The Review Panel will be charged with conducting the evaluation and writing a report, including but not limited to, the questions listed below. The answers shall be related to both the specific reasons the program is under consideration and more general considerations about the value of the program in fulfilling the Mission of the College.
- Are the assertions that initiated the evaluation true? If so, how do the data gathered suggest the program should be deactivated, reorganized, or discontinued?
  - Would deactivation or discontinuance of the program leave a serious gap in the College's efforts to fulfill its mission? If so, are there other ways to make up for the loss?
  - If it is a degree or certificate program, are there students currently enrolled who would be unable to complete their studies? What provisions will be made for them?

Specific questions for the Panel will depend on the nature of the concerns raised, but they must consider both of the following:

- a. the feasibility of solutions other than deactivation or discontinuance
  - b. whether or not the program continues to be a valuable component of the College's portfolio of academic offerings.
    - If the concern is low enrollment, what is the cause (e.g., poor reputation, irrelevance to the job market, lack of public knowledge or understanding, lack of recruitment or marketing activities and by whom)?
    - Are there ways to solve this problem? If so, at what cost, and in what time frame?
    - If the problem is financial, what is the cost per student? What revenues does the program generate for the college? A detailed budget should be included in the report. How does this compare with similar programs at the Institution and at other colleges? Are there untried and untapped sources of funding available?
    - How much outside help would be required, who would be responsible to pursue the funding, and in what time frame?
    - If a program were deactivated or discontinued, what would be the effect on enrollment in supporting disciplines and therefore on the finances of the College? If the issue is program quality, or instructional quality, what steps might be taken to remedy this, at what cost, and over what period of time? What methods could be used to assess improvement?
5. The timeframe for the report will depend on the depth and extent of the questions raised. Except in rare cases, the entire process should be completed within six months.
6. Throughout the review process, the Review Panel Chair will regularly report to the Curriculum Committee on the Panel's progress and act as a liaison for questions in either direction.
7. A final report with recommendations will be prepared by the Review Panel Chair, voted on by the entire Review Panel and submitted to the Curriculum Committee for review. The vote distribution must be included in the report.
8. The final report will be distributed campus wide for a minimum of 2 weeks for comments to be submitted in writing to the Curriculum Committee. All comments received will be appended to the Review Panel's final report.

9. The Curriculum Committee will meet with the Review Panel for an open discussion of the report and comments. The Curriculum Committee may ask for further data and another meeting for discussion. The final report will be presented by the Review Panel to the Academic Senate for a majority vote.
10. The Academic Senate will forward an official summary of the findings, recommendations and its vote to the Provost. The Provost will provide the Academic Senate with a written statement in response within 14 days.
11. Academic Senate members will consider the Provost's statement at their next meeting and forward its findings, final recommendations, its vote and the Provost's response to the President for appropriate action. If an action is taken which is counter to the recommendations, a written rationale will be submitted to the Academic Senate by the Provost or President within 45 days.
12. If the Board of Trustees votes to discontinue or deactivate a program, the Provost will prepare a detailed plan of action, including a timetable that adheres to the SUNY guidelines and those of any relevant outside accrediting agencies, as well as ensuring that students have sufficient time to complete the program. (SUNY Memorandum to Presidents Vol. 83 No. 11, August 26, 1983)

#### **Forms/Online Processes**

- None

#### **Appendix**

- None

#### **Review dates/action taken:**

- February 2016: Board of Trustees approves policy/procedures